

government by logic and the like. What I found was that rules do rule, but not in the areas you might expect. I expected rules to rule in areas like human resources and finance. But in the areas that matter more to the public, it can be remarkably hurly-burly.

OW: Would you recommend a career at DFAIT to others or to new recruits?

I've spoken to university graduates and other recruits with regard to a career in the department. DFAIT has a very good "brand", and the potential to have a stronger brand image as well. Think of the variety of challenges and opportunities that you can have as a DFAIT officer in your 20s, for example the ability to work for a prestigious Canadian organization just about anywhere in the world.

OW: You've been active in Strategic Review and have had a large role to play in transformation. Can you tell us about that?

Strategic Review is a very interesting process for a department whose credibility has been challenged in a whole series of ways. It is important that we stepped forward—being one of the first to take part in the process—and showed a willingness to engage in a stem-to-stern review of our operations. We did it well, and we've won greater credibility.

OW: What are DFAIT's geographic priorities today?

DFAIT's priorities now are a heck of a lot better known across government, and more importantly are taking effect. Afghanistan is top-of-mind. Second on the list are the U.S. and the western hemisphere more broadly, and the whole Americas

strategy—work that followed the Prime Minister's visit to Latin America and the Caribbean in 2007. The third area is emerging economies, in keeping with the times and the rise of Asia, China and India in particular.

OW: What can you tell us about DFAIT's broader priorities?

There's a good story to tell about how the department is changing. One of the things that is critical to the DFAIT mission is service delivery. That means business services for a country that is completely integrated into the global economy and is increasingly dependent on flows of trade and investment for its prosperity. Consular services—with a new branch and an increased focus—are absolutely necessary at a time when eight percent of Canadians live abroad, and Canadians are travelling more and more. Another area is passport services. This is all part of the Transformation Agenda. You do that right and you're winning a lot of credibility with the government and with Canadians more broadly.

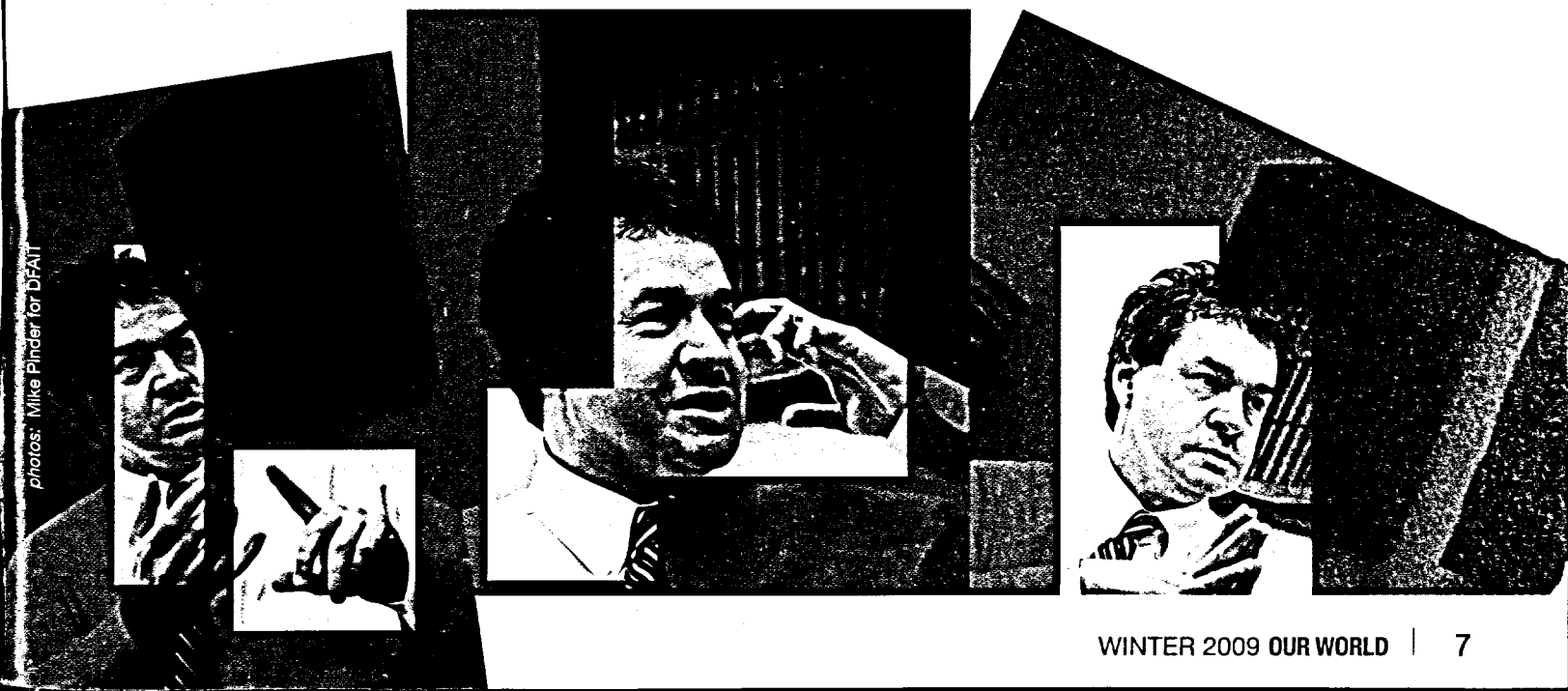
OW: What is our biggest challenge today?

We have big challenges operationally; process within the department is extremely difficult. I know somebody who claims, as a joke, that in 30 years in government, one of the toughest things he did was get the department to give him a computer when he went abroad. This is going to have to be a flatter organization, with fewer silos.

OW: What are our biggest accomplishments?

DFAIT is an incredibly diverse and dynamic organization—it's just incredible at times. I was just taking over as ADM in the summer of 2006 and I watched a whole bunch of staffers go to Lebanon to help with the evacuation of Canadian citizens there. I remain struck by the stories some told me afterward. Young staffers—some of whom had gone on temporary duty for the first time—the enthusiasm they brought to it under incredibly difficult circumstances was impressive. These are stories that will never be told publicly. In tough circumstances, this place comes through. And we're working to ensure that we're at our best at all times.

Drew Fagan, Assistant Deputy Minister (Strategic Policy and Planning), leaves DFAIT in January to become deputy minister of tourism with the Government of Ontario.



Photos: Mike Pinder for DFAIT